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Senate

The Senate met at 12:01 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God our shield, we sleep and awaken refreshed because of You.

Let Your kindness shine brightly on us. Help us to remember that people of integrity produce fruit in its season. Enable us to wait for harvest time and not think that we have failed because we bear no fruit at planting time.

Today, bless the Members of this body with Your peace. Give them genuine love, true faith, and a good conscience. Place in their hearts a wisdom that will trust You even in the dark. Help them strive to please You with their labors. Strengthen them for life's inevitable storms. Bless also the many unsung champions who work with our Senators to keep America strong.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 14, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SUNUNU thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will proceed shortly to executive session for the consideration of the nomination of Michael Chertoff to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

We have a consent agreement that will govern the debate on the nomination. During today's session, there will be up to 6 hours of debate on Michael Chertoff, and Senator COLLINS is here to manage time on behalf of the majority.

The agreement provides for additional debate between the hours of 2:15 and 4 o'clock tomorrow, with the vote on confirmation of the nomination at 4 o'clock Tuesday.

I remind all Senators that there will be no rollcall votes during today's session. We have a number of issues to address this week. Chairman ENZI and the HELP Committee have reported several bills that we are working on clearing for floor action.

In addition, the House is sending us several pieces of legislation, including the broadcast decency bill. We are talking to the appropriate committees of jurisdiction regarding the status of

that bill. The funding resolution for our committees is also scheduled for this week. Therefore, following the Chertoff nomination, there are a number of legislative items that we are hoping to clear. We will keep all Members apprised of the voting schedule as we proceed.

I want to remind all of my colleagues that on Friday of this week we will have a traditional reading of President Washington's Farewell Address. Senator RICHARD BURR is scheduled to deliver that address. I thank him in advance for his contribution to this long-standing Senate tradition.

I look forward to another good week, and I thank my colleagues for their attention.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the leader yield for a question?

Mr. FRIST. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have received several inquiries about this. I have spoken to the leader about the status of the Federal transportation bill. We are now in our third year trying to come to an agreement on that bill. I ask the leader if there is any indication on his side of progress.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in response through the Chair, the transportation bill is a major priority for the leadership on this side of the aisle and the leadership on the other side of the aisle. We have been in numerous discussions with the chairmen and ranking members for the responsible committees. There are five different committees involved. It remains a major priority. It is also, I might add, a major priority for the House of Representatives, which is committed to having appropriate committee action. We encourage the committees to act as soon as they practically can. Once that bill is ready, we will make sure it comes to the floor of the Senate. It is a bill which, as we all know, has strong bipartisan support.

We have passed a major transportation bill on the floor of this Senate,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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